REVIEWS

The Myth of the Great War: A New Military History of World War I by John Mosier, Harper Collins Publishers, New York, 2001, 381 pages, $30.00, ISBN 0-06-019676-9.

The prolific defense author James F. Dunnigan once wrote something to the effect that the loneliest person in the world is an intelligence analyst who has got it right. If this new and different perspective on World War I is correct, there were not many lonely people in that war, but those who were redefined the term "loneliness."

This book is quite different than many past histories of World War I for a number of reasons. First off, it ignores most of the political questions of how European countries got so enmeshed in each other's affairs that they would be drawn into one of the bloodiest conflicts in history. Secondly, it places the blame for much of the failures of that war on the people who often are lauded as its heroes. Lastly, it is not written by an author with any military background or "credentials" in the sense of the word as defined by military historians. Rather, Dr. Mosier is a full professor of English and Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences at Loyola University in New Orleans, who has developed his knowledge of the war as part of a research project for the National Endowment for the Humanities.

So what does a liberal arts professor from the deep South have to do with in-depth analysis of one of the most complex wars in human history? Most of the military illuminati in this day and age like to trot out the tired phrase "thinking outside the box;" in that, Professor Mosier has done an excellent job, and this book bears reading on several levels.

Most armies throughout history that have failed have failed for one primary reason: they trained to fight the last war, not the next one. France, Britain, and Russia are all shown to be guilty of this thinking, and it was one of the main reasons that they were so rapidly forced into positional warfare. The British forces were too small to be an effective battlefield instrument of power projection in less than a year's time. Those of the French, while more rapidly mobilized, were prepared to re-fight the 1870 war as one of high-speed maneuver, using light artillery with high rates of fire and machine guns to win over the Boche. The Russians were a force in being, but ill-equipped.

The Imperial German General Staff, one of the most thorough military thinking bodies that has ever existed, examined all of their opponents in turn and made mental assessments of each one. They saw the French and Belgians build fortifications in depth, and immediately began developing different calibers and echelons of artillery to deal with them. They estimated the time it would take their three main opponents to assemble, organize, move, and supply their forces, and saw a window of opportunity to smash France and neutralize England before they would have to turn to deal with the Russians. Using a modified version of the von Schlieffen plan, they swung into action in August 1914.

As most casual students of WWI know, the Germans failed to execute the plan as designed, coming to a halt in what was referred to as the (first) Battle of the Marne in September 1914. Here Mosier differs, indicating that the Battle of the Marne was a fabrication of the French General Staff to avoid having to admit the real reason for the German halt: the Germans simply overran their supply system, which could not support such a large deployed force in France.

Once the initial offensive petered out, the Germans reexamined the situation. With two forces of over two million men each facing each other in a continuous line of fieldworks stretching from the Alps to the Channel, the Germans came to the conclusion that neither side would ever be able to make the "big breakthrough" needed to force the other side to crack, nor could there ever be a single decisive battle like Austerlitz, Waterloo, or Sedan to break the back of the opponent. So they simply dug in and prepared to bleed France white.

The initial BEF commander, Sir John French, appeared to have figured this out early on and thus refused to commit the BEF in a position where it could be crushed by the Germans in this manner. He was sacked, and his replacement, Sir Douglas Haig, promptly committed the BEF and by the end of the year had taken 100,000 casualties with nothing to show for it but the loss of the trained cadre of the British Army.

The main problem in all of this was the failure of either the British or French to have a proper intelligence or operations staff. Both sides came to ridiculous conclusions without anything more than intuition to support their claims. The French and British took horrendous casualties, but since they were the "good guys," came to the conclusion that they HAD to be inflicting more casualties on the Germans, and thus were slowly running them out of men. It was the only conclusion that they could reach as to why the German offensive had stalled; they *must* have killed the flower of young Germany, and thus the Germans could press no further.

The Russians were much better and far faster in reaction than the Germans had figured; this seems to have always been the case, but it is never brought out in history. The Imperial Staff was able to get two full Russian field armies organized and sent forward on trains long before the Germans were prepared for them, and it was in a near panic that they sent for more troops from the Western front and two tough but egotistical leaders, von Hindenberg and Ludendorff, who were able to use their advantage of inner lines to defeat first one and then the second army, stalling the Russians on their borders. In fact, it was a near-run thing during the Brusilov offensive of 1916 that the Russians did not crush the Austrians and move farther than they did. Again, a large number of German divisions had to be sent east to stop them, and it was with this stopping of the Russian army during that series of southwestern offensives that the real heart went out of the Russian Army.

The Germans realized when they came up with the strategy of bleeding the French and British that their forces were too large and cumbersome at the tactical level. As a result, they completely reorganized their divisional structure. They went from a two-brigade structure with two regiments in each brigade to one of three regiments, each of three battalions of four companies plus special troops. Artillery was reorganized, with larger caliber guns going down to lower echelons. Quite often, a German divisional commander would have up to twice the firepower of a French corps commander.

Their tactics changed too. Rather than defend up front, the Germans preferred to pick ideal sites for defenses, where they could easily move back to another line if needed and turn the first line of defenses into a killing zone for their artillery. The French fell for this tactic until 1916, when they started trying to avoid being caught in the "kill zone" by the Germans. The British, on the other hand, took much longer to grasp it; the first day of the Somme in 1916, where Haig sent his troops forward en masse in four neat, orderly lines, cost 60,000 casualties on that very day, nearly all to artillery and machine-gun fire.

The British and French assessment of all of the changes made by the Germans were that their own intelligence assessments must have been correct. After all, if the Germans were a healthy force, why did they cut down on the size of their divisions? The German preference for the defense also reinforced misguided British and French assessments that the Germans could not launch an offensive. When the Germans did, and usually with only a very short bombardment to warn the victims they were coming, it was a constant surprise to both armies' intelligence staffs.

The Germans were not invincible, as Professor Mosier points out, for when they were the attackers, quite often their casualties shot up to rates similar to those of the British and French. But the German offensives were fewer, and much better planned. First off, they tried to select areas of the front whose capture offered real advantage. Too often, British and French offensives were oriented around insignificant pieces of terrain, which cost them heavily and meant little, and were usually easily reclaimed by the Germans soon afterwards. The British were all too eager to squander their forces, losing nearly 60,000 Canadians and 60,000 ANZAC troops in these poorly planned offensives.

The second factor the Germans stressed in selecting areas for an offensive was the amount of artillery fire to which that area had

been subjected. They realized that speed was of the essence if positions and objectives were to be taken on schedule. The British, in particular, loved bombardments of up to seven days' duration prior to an attack, which usually meant that their troops were either exhausted from crossing no man's land on their way to their objectives, or became hopelessly mired down in the middle. The Germans preferred engineer mortars in these situations — the ones the Tommies called "Whiz-bangs," as it made a whiz when fired and detonated with a huge bang. These rounds carried about four times the explosive of a conventional artillery projectile. Again, the result was horrendous casualties, minuscule gain in territory, and more damage to the ground the poor infantry would have to cross.

Tanks did not prove to be a solution, as the British and French both thought. The main problem was the lack of sufficient horsepower (150 hp for a 37-ton British tank could move it at around 4 mph on flat ground; the shell-cratered lines were anything but that) and thin armor, which could easily shatter with a direct hit by a standard field gun. Such was the case at Cambrai; even though a handful of tanks made their objective, the infantry was caught in the craters of no man's land or pinned down by German artillery in the first line of trenches.

In 1917, the USA entered the war, and while up to that time the Americans were felt to be upstarts who would not be able to field a "modern" army until the fall of 1918 at the earliest, the Germans did more research and became worried. America had vast, untouched resources and, as a point of fact, had been supplying the Allies with war material for some time, especially explosives, small arms, and ammunition, plus food and raw materials. They could see that if the Americans wanted to create, train, and field an army of 2 million and send it to France, they would, and it could be the decisive force in Germany's defeat.

The American choice of commander was General John J. "Black Jack" Pershing, who was an astute politician but not adept at European military politics. Both Haig and Foch saw him as a major threat to their own plans on how to win the war, as the brash Americans might actually be able to do something right. While both countries had sent experienced cadres to the U.S., the best ones were those from the survivors of French Alpine battalions, who understood the German tactics and doctrine and passed this along to the Americans. The French wanted American units to be integrated into French armies and participate in joint operations with French forces; Haig, on the other hand, only wanted the manpower to integrate directly into his forces as replacements and to be used in the same manner as other British troops.

Pershing, although he may have lacked a bit on tact and ability to politically deal with his allies, would have none of it. The American forces were to fight as a body, and be controlled as a body, by American commanders. Admittedly, these commanders included Patton, Marshall, and MacArthur, which, in hindsight, we could say was playing with a stacked deck, but Pershing had faith in U.S. forces and was not going to allow them to be frittered away for naught.

The Germans therefore felt they had to make a few last gambles to try and first beat the British, and then the French, before the American army in being became a threat in reality on their front lines. As a result, the Germans hammered the Allies in three successive offensives, beginning in March 1918 and ending in September. While they easily beat the British, and, in the estimation of Professor Mosier, effectively eliminated the BEF as a fighting force, and then proceeded to inflict heavy damage on the French, they did not achieve their goal.

Pershing's staff by itself was far better than those of the British or French, and a captain in the AEF intelligence section correctly identified the goals and direction of the last big German push against the French. While warned, the French ignored the "newcomers" and then, as usual, were thunderstruck when hit when and where they least expected it.

Beginning in June 1918, the Americans did come to the fore. First taking an insignificant area around Bois de Belleau, the Americans proved that the Germans were not invincible. While this upset the British and French — who apparently took it as "beginner's luck" — the Germans were horrified. It was the first time since August 1914 that the Germans had been beaten in open combat in France, and they felt (even as small as the victory was on a grand scale) that this was the loss of the moral superiority needed to win. Again, in July, it was the Americans who first stopped the German offensives, and then burst through their lines on what the Germans felt was key ground: Saint Mihiel.

The French were aghast that the Americans focused on this section of the front for two reasons. First, they had sacrificed hundreds of thousands of troops in this area for naught. Secondly, they were now terrified that the Americans could break through and that the honor of winning the war would go to them, and not the French Army. Foch ordered Pershing to launch his offensive elsewhere; Pershing, politely, ignored him and went in anyway. Foch then tried to task the Americans for a second offensive, something neither the French or British could do, and was again horrified by the ease and speed in which the AEF responded with what was called the Meuse-Argonne offensive. At the end of this offensive, the Germans began to approach the Americans on the subject of an Armistice. While to this day some British and French historians state that the German preoccupation with the American offensive allowed their forces to win the war, Professor Mosier points out that they only took areas abandoned by the Germans, and that combined British/French losses outstripped American losses by 4:1.

The British and French were furious, as they wound up being blackmailed into the Armistice by either having the Germans sign a separate peace with the Americans or with all of the Allied powers.

It is likely that Professor Mosier's book will not be well received overseas, as the subtitle of the book is "How the Germans Won the Battles and How America Saved the Allies." He presents a strong case for this taking place, and it does fly in the face of over 80 years of myths and anecdotal evidence to the contrary. As an "outside the box" writer, his credentials may well be called to account as sadly lacking. But then again, both the British and French looked down on the American Expeditionary Forces as we were an army of amateurs and had no "professional" staffs in 1918.

What today's readers need to take away from this book is the point that it takes a good intel staff and a good operations staff to correctly plan and fight wars. Over the course of 33 years of experience in the Army, active and civilian, I have seen all too often what happens when one side lets the other down or assumes it is superior. Happily, all but a few incidents took place in war games, where we are supposed to learn and progress with newfound wisdom.

The commander *has* to have a good intelligence section to rely on, and the losses of the BEF and French Army provide thousands of marble reasons why good interaction among the G-2, the G-3, and the commander is essential. Yet the commander cannot accept poor intelligence which, as with the British and French, only tells them what they want to hear. There are still intelligence analysts who will state — clear-eyed and with deepest sincerity — that the Russian Army is a viable combat force which can place several million troops in the field, or that the Chinese Peoples' Liberation Army is only a third-rate peasant force little changed from its Korean War days. Commanders who accept such findings will probably find themselves fighting the Sommes of the 21st century.

STEPHEN L. "COOKIE" SEWELL
CW2 (Ret.)
Aberdeen, Md.

A Soldier's Duty by Thomas E. Ricks, Random House, New York, May 2001, 320 pages, hardcover, $24.95.

In this first novel, Thomas E. Ricks, a Pulitzer-Prize winning Pentagon correspondent for the *Washington Post,* weaves a very believable and modern fictional tale that focuses on the highest "brass" in the Pentagon, Washington politics, and a peacekeeping mission in Afghanistan, to deal with many of the issues and perceptions faced by our nation and its military forces today. Although the story takes place in the unidentified but

clearly distant future, and any resemblance to actual people and events are "coincidental," it is evident that the author is current and privy to many of the Army's current debates and challenges.

The essence of the story involves General John Shillingsworth, the U.S. Army Chief of Staff, and his personal turmoil in dealing with yet another unpopular "presence deployment" to Afghanistan. His antagonist, General Byron "B.Z." Ames, the vice-chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, fuels an underground organization of Army officers known as the "Sons of Liberty" to undermine Shillingsworth and end the mission. Ames despises the current President, NSA, and most members of Congress, who never wore the uniform and have no understanding of the military or military operations, nor, in his opinion, have the right to send untrained troops to die in such a "political" mission in Afghanistan.

Many characters, specifically the aides-de-camp of both generals, move the story along to its somewhat predictable ending. Major Cindy Sherman and Major Buddy Lewis, aides to Shillingsworth and Ames respectively, cleverly enlighten the reader in areas running the gamut from junior officer mistrust of senior leaders, back-to-back deployments, officer and personnel attrition and retention, limited resources, training and readiness, gender integration, gays in the military, greed, and selfless service to the nation. The author professionally and tastefully addresses or highlights these issues in an almost neutral fashion without clear bias in order to seemingly allow the reader to make his or her own conclusions about the characters and their actions.

Anyone serving the Army or military today can easily and readily relate to this story and will most likely find some resemblance to subordinates, peers, and senior leaders as well as comparable events and dilemmas that they have encountered in their own careers in uniform. Although fictional, the story is very believable and not unrealistic in addressing the possibilities of events to come as the military continues to define its role in the twenty-first century and American politics.

A Soldier's Duty is a well-written adventure, conflict, mystery, murder, and even romance story that is entertaining and makes for a good novel if one is inclined to read such material. That being said, this is not a book that belongs on the bookshelf of every soldier and is not likely to make it onto any professional reading list, now or in the near future. Despite what the publisher's note would have you believe, it is unlikely that this novel will become the *Once an Eagle* for the twenty-first century. However, only time will determine if the lessons of leadership, character, and ethics present in this story will evolve this novel into another great military classic.

JIM DUNIVAN
CPT, Armor
Ft. Knox, Ky.

Retreat to the Reich, The German Defeat in France, 1944 by Samuel W. Mitcham, Jr., Praeger, Westport, Conn., 2000, 304 pages with index, $27.50.

Samuel W. Mitcham is a Professor of Geography at the University of Louisiana in Monroe. He is also the author of numerous works of military history, most recently *Rommel's Greatest Victory, The Desert Fox and the Fall of Tobruk, Spring 1942* (Presidio Press, 1998). Just about everything he has written, in fact, has related in some way to the German Army of the Second World War. In this, his twentieth book to run through the same vein, he demonstrates that while he may not have acquired breadth in his understanding of the military history of the period, he certainly has the depth in one topic required to convey vast amounts of information to the reader. This new book is a solid "operational history" from the German point of view.

In military history, there are several subgenres. There is, of course, the traditional "bugles and trumpets" sort of patriotic first-person military history made popular by several well-known military historians in the past few years. There is also a more sophisticated (but not always useful) sub-field one might call "social-military history." This is a type of history that seeks answers to broader questions or applies emergent theories of human behavior to questions of military history in search for "answers." Then there is one of the older types of military history, "operational history." This is the straightforward account, without interpretation, of events in a battle or campaign in a sequential narrative. Best written without emotion, this type of history forms the foundation for all others. It is the record of facts, not the interpretation of them. In *Retreat to the Reich,* Mitcham gives us a decent, single-source account of the German side of the Battle of France.

On the down side, one suspects after a while that perhaps Mitcham has become too enamored of his subject. His portrayals of the officers in the German Wehrmacht are generally favorable, and in some cases are openly admiring. After just a few dozen pages, one begins to wonder, given what we know of the actions of the German Army and nation in the Second World War, if these are the same officers that we were fighting in World War II. Mitcham generally accomplishes this historical sleight-of-hand by not delving too deeply into the personal histories of these officers and generally relying upon their own post-war memoirs for accounts of their actions and behaviors. Thus he avoids mentioning their participation in any massacres or pre-war applications of force against Jews or other minorities. One notes especially that he carefully avoids noting the actions of these German officers or their units on the Eastern Front. In fact, the only distasteful actions in the entire book are the summary executions of SS troops at the hand of some American MPs and another more general suggestion that this was a common practice that summer and fall of 1944. Not once does a German unit or officer misbehave or maltreat prisoners or civilians in their precipitous retreat across France. Apparently only Americans (and Canadians) did that sort of thing. This was, I will admit, news to me.

What Mitcham does devote a lot of verbiage toward is a fairly complete account of the underground anti-Hitler conspiracies that permeated the Wehrmacht during the war. While the fact remains that these conspirators never actually made an attempt on Hitler's life until the summer of 1944, the fact that there was at least some movement cannot be ignored. I will readily concede that the few dozen pages Mitcham devotes to this aspect of German Army history are some of the best and most interesting in the book. In the end, however, I am reminded that there were hundreds of thousands of officers in the armed forces of Nazi Germany, and only a few dozen actually tried to do anything about Hitler. That's a fact that you tend to forget when reading this book.

However, there were some interesting parts. Among the most interesting facts Mitcham brings out is the history of one Lieutenant Colonel (later Major General) Henning von Treschow. Treschow, a career officer, had been coordinating various groups towards an attempt on Hitler's life as early as 1942. As the Chief of Staff of Army Group Center (on the Eastern Front) he had maneuvered to collect several like-minded officers together in that Headquarters so that it became the center of resistance to Hitler's régime. One by-product of this cabal was the creation of a military unit that could, should the situation arise, be used in direct combat against Nazi forces. That unit was a cavalry regiment commanded by the younger brother of one of Treschow's co-conspirators, Captain Georg von Boeselager. The "Boeselager Cavalry Unit" became the "Cavalry Regiment Center" and was essentially the fire-brigade for Army Group Center. With more than 600 Russian Cossacks in the ranks, and a specially selected cadre, it was also potentially the foundation for a coup. Such was not to be, alas, as the one attempt on Hitler's life in 1943 was an abysmal failure. (Obviously, this is the foundation for the famous Boeselager Cavalry Cup competition that all NATO tankers are familiar with.)

As an operational level history, the history of a campaign, this book does a decent job explaining how the German Army fell apart in the summer of '44. One learns from Mitcham's broad strokes where each unit was, what their missions were, and how their commanders interacted. It would be interesting to match this book against Stephen Ambrose's *Citizen Soldiers*. This approach would allow the readers to cover the same period and many of the same smaller unit actions, from both sides.

The straight military utility of this book is limited. Unless you are a die-hard history enthusiast you will not find much utility in this work. There is not a noncommissioned offi-

cer even so much as mentioned in the whole thing, but that is understandable when you remember that the focus here is on the movement of divisions, corps, and armies. For the same reason there is no mention of lieutenants or captains or majors, and even lieutenant colonels only appear as aides to the field marshals. If you are looking for something to help you become a better tanker, you might look elsewhere. If, instead, you want or need to know about operational level maneuver, this might be a work you could consult.

MAJ ROBERT L. BATEMAN
Military Fellow, Center for Strategic
and International Studies
Washington, D.C.

Military Briefs No. 2, Israeli Tank-Based Carriers by Marsh Gelbart, Mouse House Enterprises, P.O. Box 1174, Woden ACT 2606, Australia, 72 pages, estimated $20.00.

Web: *www.webone.com.au/~myszka/*
Email: *mousehouse@start.com.au*

This is a must-have book for anyone seriously interested in broadening their knowledge in the area of armored fighting vehicle identification (AFVID). Marsh Gelbart is a widely known author in the field of AFVID, and this book would be a welcome addition to anyone's AFVID library.

The book is magazine-sized, in pamphlet-like style, with 126 pictures depicting various action and motor pool views of the selected tank-based carriers, and includes detailed captioning with each picture. Also included are line drawings that serve to detail the various ways these vehicles are configured. The text is not overly extensive but is more than adequate in covering the subject. The various features, markings, and components of each vehicle and an explanation on how these features are utilized is well represented with the author's judicious use of pictures and detailed captions.

As many know, the Israelis have a different perspective on infantry fighting vehicles (IFV) on the battlefield. (On this subject, see "Deployable Versus Survivable," in the March-April 2001 ARMOR. –*Ed*.) This book actually explains where this philosophy came from and how Israel developed the heavy APC over the last twenty years. This philosophy can be summed up with the statement found in the book that "an infantry carrier, by virtue of its function, is exposed to greater risk than a tank. A tank can command an objective by fire from some distance, whilst an infantry carrier may be called upon to traverse a fire zone in order to deliver its infantry onto that same objective." This philosophy resulted in the development of heavy infantry vehicles as a byproduct of the lessons learned in combat in southern Lebanon during 1982. Additionally, the selection of armament for heavy APCs is driven by the belief that since the primary mission is to deliver infantry, and the primary threat is from enemy infantry, vehicle firepower should be optimized for this threat in the form of machine guns.

Societal reluctance to accept heavy casualties also drove Israel's development of heavy APCs. The heavy APC is a natural development when force protection is given priority and when considering the Israeli philosophy in how APCs function on the battlefield. In the book's conclusion, Mr. Gelbart mentions — but does not elaborate on — the similar Russian development of a tank chassis-based heavy APC. This is interesting to note, because the Russians developed their heavy APCs from similar force protection issues that arose from combat operations in Chechnya. This trend, towards heavy APCs, adds credence to the debate on whether our nation's decision to develop lightly-armored, rapidly-deployable vehicles to transport infantry is correct.

What makes this book such a must-have item is the fact that it covers a class of vehicle not widely discussed in more mainstream literature. Published references on AFVID are often a collection of generic information on a selected list of vehicles, and most do not delve in-depth into why those vehicles were developed. Though only addressing a selected class from Israel, this well-prepared and documented reference should be in the library of all AFVID trainers.

SFC IRA L. PARTRIDGE
Master Gunner Operations
Ft. Knox, Ky.

Kasserine Pass: Rommel's Bloody, Climactic Battle for Tunisia by Martin Blumenson, Cooper Square Press, 2000, 341 pages, $19.95, paperback.

This is a re-publication of a classic 1966 book, *Kasserine Pass: Rommel's Bloody, Climactic Battle for Tunisia.* In it, Martin Blumenson provides a clear and objective recounting of the initial confrontation between German and American forces in World War II. Through meticulous research in the official records of the North African campaign, and discussions with surviving participants, Blumenson reconstructs the battle and personalities of this critical engagement in a very readable prose. He shows how the combination of Erwin Rommel's tactical genius, coupled with American ineptitude, overconfidence, and lack of experience resulted in a tactical defeat for the American army.

At the strategic level, Blumenson's book illustrates the command and control difficulties that both Eisenhower and Rommel had with combined operations. Eisenhower was hampered by ambiguous U.S., British, and French command arrangements and extreme political sensitivities. Similarly, Rommel was burdened by an unworkable Italian and German relationship which failed to react to the battlefield. At the operational and tactical level, Blumenson's historically accurate research minces no words in detailing the fumblings of the U.S. forces and their commanders.

The author shows that the Battle of Kasserine actually proved beneficial to the Allies by shaking up coalition command arrangements and jarring U.S. overconfidence.

Although Blumenson's research is impeccable, and the book is fast-paced and easy to read, his use of maps is weak. They are present in the book, but their lack of detail in terms of force dispositions and unit movement makes it very difficult for the reader to follow the battle. This re-publication should have addressed this flaw. Otherwise, I can strongly recommend this book as a key building block to understanding the American Army in World War II.

KEVIN D. STRINGER
MAJ, AV, USAR
Switzerland

My War Gone By, I Miss It So by Anthony Loyd, Penguin, New York, 1999, 321 pages, $14.00.

In a book that is almost as much a healing for the author as it is war correspondence, Anthony Loyd travels to Bosnia in the early '90s, to "find" a war that he never got to fight in Desert Storm as a British platoon commander.

In this 321-page book of a self-loathing death-wish, the author travels between Central Bosnia, a London flat and Grozny, Chechnya, revealing the most intimate details of his heroin abuse and the war he seeks out as the only refuge from his addition. If this book had included a 17th-century composer and Stanley Kubrick's permission, Loyd could have written a sequel to "A Clockwork Orange," only on a national level. The almost-surreal nature of combat, both in the Balkans and in Chechnya, reveal the worst in combat, something not seen in the likes of World War II, Korea, or even Vietnam.

His harrowing tale of murder, rape, and carnage on the front lines of Bosnia are a must read for anyone who will serve in the Balkans. One must appreciate the hell that was forged by all three guilty parties in Bosnia and Loyd does a perfect job of capturing it. He also portrays the Bosnian people openly and accurately, accentuating their bravado as well as their kindness on a personal level. Also reflected in his work is the pure evil that comes from a battle where the combatants are fighting for everything from Allah to fascism.

Once you stomach the "stream-of-consciousness" chapters in which Loyd battles his addiction to heroin, he allows you to see the demons he is fighting and his need to go to war as a means of self-destruction in a time of his life where he is drifting between boredom, "smack" withdrawal, and self-disgust.

Loyd captures combat better because he was there. Read this book before you land in Tuzla or take the bus up from Skopje to Camp Montieth, Kosovo.

CPT DOUG HUBER
Fort Knox, Ky.